

## THE CAUSE AND CURE OF THE BLUES

Psalm 77.

Some one has suggested that David wrote the 77th psalm just after recovering from a spell of the blues. At any rate it gives us the experience of one who had them and found out how to get over them. Have you the blues? Who has not had them at some time? Cheer up. The disease is bad to be sure, but it need not be fatal. Let us see what it is that causes the blues and then proceed to the cure.

## Causes of the Blues

1. LOVE OF SORROW.—Ps. 77: 2. "*My soul refused to be comforted.*" Just so, in nine cases out of ten there is comfort enough, but we will have none of it. We are blue and we want to be blue and we don't want anyone to interfere with our blues. Get out with your sunshine; we want to pout. We won't be happy unless we can mourn.

2. WRONG NOTIONS OF GOD.—Vs. 3. "*I remembered God and was troubled.*" Now why should a man be troubled when thinking about God? He is good and gracious, kind and merciful. At another time the psalmist declared "In thy presence is fulness of joy." Is it so with you my blue friend? Cheer up. God has not played false. Throw away your colored glass and let his love shine in.

3. GRUMBLING.—Vs. 3. "*I complained and my spirit was overwhelmed Selah*" It is time to pause. Begin to complain and your spirit will soon be overwhelmed. See faults in others and you will imagine that others see faults in you until you have not a friend left. Does complaining help matters any? Did you ever know swearing to stop a fire? But there is a way to stop one. You won't have breath enough for grumbling and for singing too. Try the songs first.

4. NIGHT WORRY.—Vs. 4. "*Thou holdest mine eyes waking.*" Who holds your eyes waking? If you would quit your complaining and sleep you might get over your dyspepsia and find life worth living after all. Do we not read "He giveth his beloved sleep." Pray for it. It is bad enough to fill the day with complainings. Let the night bring peace. Think again; are you not holding your own eyes open in order to keep your blue image from escaping?

5. SULKINESS.—Vs. 4. "*I am so troubled that I cannot speak.*" Too bad! Too bad! But no wonder. What with complaining, and lying awake at night, and refusing to be comforted, this moroseness was inevitable. If you want the blues worse and worse just keep on sulking by yourself. Don't talk to any one. Just meditate on the general depravity of people and things. There is nothing in the world to think about or talk about but your own trouble!

6. LIVING IN THE PAST.—Vs. 5. "*I have considered the days of old.*" Yes, yes. Oth-

ers may call this the grandest age of the world's history and say the kingdom is nearer in its fulness than ever before, but don't you believe it. Things are going to smash. The good old days are gone. Think of those times! Mourn for them. God used up all the sunshine and people all their love in those days. O people may have voices now but not be singing. Don't think of any such possibility—not if you want the blues.

7. MORBID SELF CONSCIOUSNESS.—Vs. 6. "*I commune with my own heart.*" Another mark of a bad case. People who are busy helping somebody don't have time to look at themselves until they cannot see anything else but themselves and their troubles. Don't try to think of any one else or you might forget that you have such a wretched lot. After all you are the only one in the world worth thinking about aren't you?

8. DOUBT. In verses seven to ten there are six questions implying unbelief in God and things in general. This is the extremity to which the blues will lead, and this marks the crisis. Unless this symptom can be overcome the disease will prove fatal. Lose faith in God and there is nothing left to hold to. Let us turn to the cure.

## The Cure

1. OPEN CONFESSION.—Vs. 10. "*I said, This is my infirmity.*" Good! That is what we have told you all the time but you would not believe it. You knew it but as long as you would not confess it there was no hope for you. Keep on. Make a clean breast of everything and humble yourself before God. That is the first step toward recovery. Unburden yourself and then there will be room for better thoughts.

2. RIGHT MEDITATION.—Vs. 12. "*I will meditate also on all thy work.*" See? Before you thought only of yourself. Now as you think of the works of God faith begins to dawn, and love to burn more brightly, and hope sings her song to your soul. Cheer up. The more you think of God the smaller will grow your trouble. Cheer up. You will be shouting soon.

3. OPEN TESTIMONY.—Vs. 13. "*Who is so great a God as our God.*" Sure enough. Here comes the word of praise already. Communion with God in the right spirit is bound to bring it. Not troubled now when you think of God are you? He is ever the same. Speak out. Your confession was good. Your testimony will be better. Be out and out. The blues can never thrive on praise. When telling of the goodness of God you will not lack for something to say.

4. FAITH IN GOD. As verses seven to ten were filled with doubts so verses fourteen to twenty are expressions of faith. The cure is complete. The case was as extreme as could be, and all the regular symptoms were present, but the cure is effectual. Faith in

God will pierce the dark cloud. The sunshine is streaming down ever the same.

The blues arise from the weakness of human nature. They are not born of good health or of consecration. Prevention is better than cure, and prevention is not difficult. Regular use of the means of grace, the Bible, prayer, the church, good reading, good company and good thoughts, these will give one such thoughts as will leave no room for the blues.

## Where There is Peace

There is an old picture which shows us life as a broad sea, tossed by storms, and filled with wrecks. In the midst of the sea a rock rises, high above the waves. In the rock above the wild waves, a cleft appears, in which we see flowers and grasses. And nestling there in the midst of these a dove is seen sitting on her nest. That is a picture of peace in the midst of life's wildest storms. In the Rock of Ages there is a cleft for every soul, and in that rock we may have perfect peace amidst life's storms and trials and oppositions.

## The Cross and Life

There is a legend which says that when the Empress Helena found three crosses on Calvary and could not tell which was the Savior's, she had a dead body brought and laid in turn on each of the crosses. When it touched the true cross life was restored. It is only a legend, but it reminds us of the real truth that when a soul is brought in personal touch with Christ by faith that soul lives. As the cross was the instrument of death, so it has become the instrument of life. There is no death beneath the cross of him who died to save the world. He lives who touches that cross by faith; he is immortal who finds refuge beneath the accursed tree.

## Personal Mention

Brother Furry writes encouragingly of the progress of higher education in other fields. In this one thing we need to be more "progressive."

Brother J. L. Bowman reports one received into the Pike congregation by baptism, and the outlook for the work gradually growing brighter.

Brother Lyon writes that one more has been added to the mission in the capital city. We regret to learn that the work does not receive the prompt and hearty financial support that it deserves.

Brother J. Milo Wolfe says, "The Angelus is an excellent paper. I do not think it is equaled for Sunday school scholars." Thanks. There are yet some forty schools not using the paper. We should have their support.